RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 11th November, 1987/20 Kartika, 1909 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the Clock

Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Incongruity in fares of Chair Cars on Broad Gauge and Metre Gauge systems

*61. DR. H.P. SHARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a marked incongruity in fares of chair-cars on broad-gauge and metre gauge systems, in so far as the fares of chair cars without air-conditioning on metre gauge are practically double that of air-conditioned chair-cars on broad gauge;

(b) whether the fares of chair-cars without air-conditioning on 'Pink City Express' are doubled merely by dubbing them as first class and whether this has caused a great deal of resentment amongst the users;

(c) what are the reasons for such incongruity in fares; and

(d) whether Government propose to rectify this anomaly, either by air-conditioning the chair-cars on metre gauge system or by lowering down the first class fares so as to conform with those on the broad gauge system, if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Different fares are charged for different classes of travel, but the fares for the same class are uniform over the Indian Railways, irrespective of gauge. Fares for A C. Chair Car are uniformly lower than for First Class.

(b) On Pink City Express, First Class Fares are charged for the First Class Chair Cars which are attached. Some representations have been received in regard to this charge.

(c) There is no incongruity as the fares for First Class Chair Car are the same on Broad Gauge and Metre Gauge.

(d) Does not arise.

DR H. P. SHARMA: Sir, the reply given is a typical bureaucrat's reply to a genuine demand of the people. I think the Minister is much too intelligent a person not to see the incongruity between the intent or the thrust of the question and the reply given. My question is with regard to the differentiation between two sets of facilities in the metre gauge and broad gauge systems Specifically I pointed out to the Pink City Express. On the broad gauge, you charge half the amount for chair-car with air-conditioning. But on the metre gauge, for a chair-car without air-conditioning, you charge double the fare. It will make my task easier if I give you two sets of fares. The charge from Delhi to Kanpur by air-conditioned chair-car is Rs. 107/-. For the same distance from Delhi to Ajmer without air-conditioning, the charge is Rs. 201/-. On the 'Rajdhani' from Delhi to Kanpur for the same distance with the same facilities, you charge Rs 155/-, but on the Pink City Express without air-conditioning, without food, without the benefit of tea, you charge Rs. 201. Yet you give me the reply that there is no incongruity.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: What is the question, Sir?

DR. H P SHARMA: My question is that you should remove the incongruity between two sets of fares.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is right. Put it as a question *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Is the statement that he made true?

DR H P SHARMA: I stand corrected Are you denying what I have said is true?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I have already said that there is no incongruity in the fare structure. There is uniformity The First Class category includes First Class Chair-car. This was done in conformity with the Rail Tariff Enquiry Committte, Paranjpe Committee, which

recommended that the fare for First Class Chair-Car should be the same as for the conventional First Class. This was recommendation No. 73. As a result whatever is the First Class charge, it is applicable to First Class Chair-Car also. It is the policy of the Railway Ministry to differentiate between the First Class travel and the AC Chair-Car travel because we consider that it, the AC Chair Car caters to the less affluent sections of society and in terms of leg space and space for mobility within the coach, gives less space to move around and, therefore, that differentiation is there between these two. The only thing I can say is we also as a matter of policy, are phasing out the first class coaches. We are not any more making first class coaches, and first class chair cars. We are replacing them by second class AC two-tier on the broad gauge. We are replacing the first class chair cars by AC chair cars in a phased programme. When that becomes applicable, it will mitigate the problem. At that time we can think of substituting this for the airconditioned... (*Interruption*) I hope I have left the questioner sufficiently confused.

DR. H. P. SHARMA: There is a provision for refund when there is a failure of the airconditioning equipment. The difference between the Pink City Express chair car and an airconditioned chair car can be taken to mean that there is a built-in provision for failure of airconditioning; the difference is that there is a permanent blockade of airconditioning. I have tried to find out, when there is a failure of the airconditioning equipment in the AC chair car, you charge only the amount for a second class coach and refund the rest You are charging, Mr. Minister, almost four times the fare of a second class seat in the Pink City Express.

Part (c) of my question was about the incongruity in fares. How soon are you going to correct it? Your answer is that that the question does not airse. It does arise. A passenger pays Rs 201 on one train whereas for a similar facility on Rajdhani you pay only Rs 150 and yet you say the question does not arise? How soon are you going to correct this incongruity?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I maintain that it is a question of maintaining uniformity over the entire railway system and that there is no incongruity. However, the honourable Member's suggestion will be noted.

श्री प्रमोद महाजन: सभापति महोदय वैसे तो वातानुकूलित कुर्सीयान तथाकथित पहले दर्जे के कुर्सीयान की अपेक्षा अधिक मंहगा होना चाहिये क्योंकि उसमे शायद चलने फिरने के लिये जगह कम हो, लेकिन वातानुकूलन का सुख होता है और वह पहले दर्जे में मिलता नही है, लेकिन पता नहीं रेलवे का उद्देश्य किस प्रकार का है. इसलिये मेरा पहला प्रश्न यह है कि पहले दर्जे के कुर्सीयान शब्द का जो प्रयोग आपने किया है, क्या दूसरे दर्जे का भी कुर्सीयान है जिसके कारण इसका विशेष दर्जा है ? दूसरा प्रश्न मेरा यह है कि वातानुकूलन का अधिक सुख मिलता है या चलने फिरने का अधिक सुख मिलता है इन दोनों को बराबर करके एक सी चेयर कार पर एक सा किराया लगाने पर रेल मंत्रालय विचार करेगा ?

श्री माधवराव सिंधिया महोदय दूसरे दर्जे की चेयर कार नही है लेकिन सैकिड क्लास आर्डिनरी में दिन के समय लोग बैठकर जाते हैं और बैठने के हिसाब से सीट अलाट की जाती है, किन्तु चेयर कार दूसरे दर्जे की नहीं है ।

श्री प्रमोद महाजन मैने कहा कि वातानुकूलन का अधिक सुख उसमें है.

श्री एन० के० पी० सलवे: आप प्रश्न हिन्दी मे पूछिए ।

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: All right, I will ask my question in Hindi now. If the airconditioned coaches provide the facility of...

श्री माधवराव सिंधिया: मैने कहा है कि एयर कंडीशनिंग की सुविधा सेकंड क्लास मे नही है, ए. सी. चेयरकार में है पर साथ ही साथ वहा जगह तो प्रत्येक यात्री को दी जाती है वह जगह मात्रा में काफी कुछ कम है फर्स्ट क्लास की तुलना मे जैसा कि ब्राडगेज में 60 सीटें दी जाती है फर्स्टक्लास चेयर मे या फिर 48 दी जाती है और ए सी. चेयरकार में 73 दी जाती हैं। ए. सी. चेयरकार मे ज्यादा सख्या मे लोगो को बैठाया जाता है इस लिये कुछ असुविधा फर्स्ट क्लास की तुलना में इस दृष्टि से अवश्य अनुभव यात्री करता होगा। जो सुविधा उस को उपलब्ध है एयरकंडीशंड के कारण शायद उससे ज्यादा उसको असुविधा महसूस होती है कम जगह के कारण।

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Are you going to replace First Class AC by AC Sleeper?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Sukomal Sen.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, in the long-distance trains also there are AC Chair Cars like the De luxe trains, the Rajdhani Express, etc. Now, it is quite comfortable and one is very comfortable in this. But it is very difficult to travel during the nights in the AC Chair Cars because there are no sleepers. I think there are 72 chairs in an AC Chair Car coach I would like the honourable Minister to examine whether it is feasible to convert these AC Chair Cars into AC Three-Tier sleepers with 72 berths, cushioned berths so that the passengers can travel and also sleep at night. The fares also can be kept at the same level as for the Chair Cars. The Government will not lose anything. On the contrary, the passengers will be travelling comfortably I think there is a proposal also in this regard...

MR CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sen, does this supplementary arise from the main question?

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How?

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, this is only an extension of the main question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is about the difference in fares for the Chair Cars on BG and MG and about the fare being double that on BG even when it is not air-conditioned. So, your question is not a part of the main question.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, it is an extension of that question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. This question does not arise. You put another question.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, the Minister is ready to answer... (*Interruptions*) ...I think he is interested in answering it and certainly, Sir, he can answer that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But I have to regulate it, he is not regulating it. Please sit down. Yes, Mr. Jagesh Desai.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Sir, first of all, I would like to give some historical background regarding the First Class Chair Car and AC Chair Car. It was provided in those trains, I mean the First Class Chair Cars, which were running during daytime only. Now, in these trains which are daytime trains, AC Chair Cars also have been added and the people prefer to go by AC Chair Car. Because they do not get accommodation there, they have to go by First Class Chair Car by paying higher fares. I would like to give an example. Recently, I had to go somewhere and I did not get accommodation in the AC Chair Car and I had to travel by the First Class Chair-Car where there were not many amenities. Now, the Railway Ministry's decision is there that as far as possible First Class is to be cancelled and AC Sleeper has to be added. In the same way, I would like to know whether they are thinking interms of abolishing the First Class Chair Car and adding AC Chair Cars in those trains which are running during daytime.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Sir, we have taken a decision that over a period of time we will be phasing out First Class and be replacing it by AC Sleepers. But it will be done over a period of time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Vaghela.

श्री शकर सिंह वाघेला : थोड़ी संसद सदस्यों की बात कर लू। 77–78 मे राजधानी मे सिर्फ कुर्सीयान मे ट्रेवलिग एलाउम था। उसके बाद आपने ए. सी. स्लीपर मे राजधानी मे एलाउ किया। एक एम. पी. ए. सी स्लीपर राजधानी मे ट्रेवलिग करता है तो उसको एक्स्ट्रा कुछ नही देना पड़ता। अगर दूसरी गाड़ी मे फर्स्टक्लास आर्डिनरी या ए. सी. स्लीपर से ट्रेवल करता है तो एक्स्ट्रा बैडिग चार्जेज, एक्स्ट्रा खाने के चार्जेज देने पड़ते है। यह डिफरेंस क्यो है? राजधानी और फर्स्टक्लास में रेलवे के आफीसर का जो कोटा है उससे ज्यादा लोग ट्रेवल करते हैं। क्या ससद सदस्यों को आप रेलवे के उन अफसरो के लेवल मे गिनते है?

श्री माधवराव सिंधिया: श्रीमन्, इसके लिये सपरेट नोटिस देना पड़ेगा। This is not relevant to this particular question. But what the hon. Member has raised I will certainly look into.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Sir, I appreciate the point that it is possible to distinguish between one type of chair car and another There can be first class chair car and second class chair car But the point is, is it necessary that the fare difference should lead to so much inconvenience to second class chair car passengers even in Rajdhani, not only in Pink Express or otherwise? One suggestion is that this may be converted into three-tier sleeper berths. Can't we, for those travelling long-distance, either abolish chair cars or give more comfort so that during the night they can have adequate lying room and they can sleep? Would he kindly consider this?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: The pressure on the system is so great that we tried to increase the capacity to the maximum possible, extent, but the passengers' comfort is also kept in mind. This is a blend and balance between the two conflicting interests and we hoped to have struck a happy blend I am sorry that some people still feel rather unhappy about what we think is a very happy mode of travel. But the suggestion that the hon. Member has made today—and the hon Member is very active as far as the Railway Ministry is concerned—I will certainly keep in mind.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you ever travelled in the 'Pink City'?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: No, I have not.

MR CHAIRMAN. Once you travel, you will know what Dr. H. P. Sharma has told. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE: The difficulty is that the 'Pink City' does not pass through Gwalior! (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Sir, the Minister has successfully dodged reply to the main question. The point here is that the second class air-conditioned chair car fares are lower than the first class fares Particularly where daytime journey is involved, even if you put ordinary first class also, nobody can sleep there. They think that passengers force them to get up and everybody has to sit. I myself pointed out to him previously about two trains where a full first class was being put in day trains where people had to go sitting and the fare is much higher than the air-conditioned chair cars That is why we requested him and he has agreed and he replaced it My point is that wherever first class fares are being charged, they prefer always the air-conditioned chair car if they have to keep sitting Therefore, it is reasonable that this is replaced by chair car. Will the Minister assure that wherever such trains are there he will immediately replace them?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: No assurance is forthcoming. Only assurance that the suggestions are being constantly noted is certainly there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question: 62.

Universalisation of elementary education

*62 SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present average drop-out rate in primary and middle schools in the country; and